

Lower drink drive limit

frequently asked questions

1. What is the new limit?

From 5 December 2014, the drink drive limit in Scotland will be 50mg of alcohol in 100ml of blood. This is a reduction from the previous limit of 80mg.

2. Why has it been reduced?

Evidence from other countries shows reducing the limit will reduce the number of incidents and save lives.

3. How much can I drink and still be safe to drive?

The safest answer is "nothing". It is very difficult to convert the new limit into an accurate estimate of how much you can drink because everyone is different. It depends on factors including the size and strength of the drink, a person's age, gender and weight.

Even a very small amount of alcohol affects your coordination, reaction times, judgement and ability to drive safely. It is impossible to judge whether you are over or under the legal limit without a breathalyser or blood test so the safest thing to do is to avoid alcohol completely if you have to drive.

4. What about driving the next day?

You could still be over the limit the morning after a night's drinking, even if you wake up feeling sober and refreshed. It takes the body around one hour to process one unit of alcohol; that means it could take up to 12 hours to be safe to drive after drinking a bottle of wine or 4 pints of beer.

Only time will get alcohol out of your system, not black coffee, a meal or a few hours' sleep.



5. I don't feel drunk after a couple of pints, surely I'm safe to drive?

No. You may feel fine but drivers with any alcohol in their bloodstream are less safe than those who have had nothing to drink. Research shows that even just one alcoholic drink before driving can make you three times more likely to be involved in a fatal car crash.



6. Why isn't the limit zero?

A limit of 0mg/100ml wouldn't be workable because there are very small amounts of alcohol in some foods, mouthwashes and medicines.



7. What happens if I get caught driving over the limit?

Being caught driving over the legal limit or failing to provide a specimen when required carries penalties of automatic loss of licence, a fine up to £5000, a criminal record and the possibility of a prison sentence.

Causing death by careless driving when under the influence of alcohol or drugs could mean up to 10 years in prison, an unlimited fine and automatic disqualification from driving.

Don't put your own and other people's lives at risk.

Don't drink before driving.